

Author: Janis Claflin
Date: June 18, 2011
Category: Oral History
Interview Date: June 18, 2011
Place: Janis Claflin Residence, Austin, Texas
Interviewee: S Janis Claflin
Interviewer: Larry Massie
Attendees: Larry Massie, Janis Claflin
Topic: John Fetzer's Spiritual Search
Draft: July 28, 2011
Edited: November 20, 2017

Larry Janis, I appreciate you taking this time and, as you know, this project kind of narrows in on John's spiritual search. I read the transcript of the interview you gave to Phil Mason 15 years ago. I know a little bit about your experiences up to that time, to 1996. I also know that when Mr. Fetzer hired you as a consultant, you spent a lot of time at the Institute getting things straightened out, and then you would go to his house and have meals with him. I'm wondering, what kinds of conversations you might have had during that time, dealing with his manifold spiritual beliefs?

Janis What's interesting is, John never really sat and talked to me specifically about his spiritual beliefs. When he interviewed me, he was interested in my journey, but when I would go to talk to him, that kind of conversation came up more in the normal course of other kinds of conversations.

Larry Yes.

Janis It's like he had an interpretive screen that was his spiritual perspective that he saw everything through.

Larry Like a filter.

Janis That's right. It was like a screen. It was like a place it came from inside of himself, to interpret whatever was going on in his life or in the life of others.

Larry Right.

Janis So I learned a lot about what you could call his theology.

Larry Yes.

Janis I learned a lot about his theology. I learned a lot about how that got translated into his behavioral choices, and how that was just the core and the center of his life. So any of us have the world divided into secular and sacred.

Larry Yes.

Janis I feel certain John did that, too, earlier in his life.

Larry Yes.

Janis By the time I worked for him, it was one whole. There wasn't anything that wasn't spiritually important.

Larry It occurs to me that earlier on, because he was a very astute businessman, there would have had to be a separation, because you can't be a sharp businessman and espouse love and all that, I don't think.

Janis Well, now that's not true. I mean one of the things he really drilled me about was my experience in organizational consulting. One of the reasons I've been doing that work all my life is for the purpose of organizational transformation. What you want to look at is, what are the underlying values in unconscious awareness that inform how people take care of people, how people choose to relate to business opportunities or not.

Larry Right.

Janis The kinds of products or services they would choose to be engaged in, performing for the world.

Larry I see.

Janis So no, actually I came there as a business consultant, and he grilled me about my values.

Larry Really?

Janis Yes, we talked a lot about purpose, the nature of purpose in life, how that related to business, and how it related to the business of the Foundation for sure.

Larry Now, your background was more traditional religion, is that right? Methodist?

Janis Yes and no. No, I'm not Methodist. Right now I'm a member of a Presbyterian church, but I say I'm not really Presbyterian. I'm Christian and my Christ is huge. I think Christ consciousness is present in every major spiritual path that has to do with love.

Larry When you talked to John first, did you have that same belief, or have you evolved?

Janis Yes, I did.

Larry Okay.

Janis I did, but I started out as a little fundamentalist in life, which is a natural evolutionary stage for all of us. You can be fundamentalist about politics or religion or sex or money or whatever, you know?

Larry Yes.

Janis But I was raised at a Church of Christ, which is a Bible Belt fundamentalist denomination.

Larry Is it Calvinist?

Janis I was taken there by my great aunt. But my mother and father didn't go to church. They had been burned by fundamentalism, both of them. They had good faith, but they were not "religious" in that way. I grew up with a double-edged formation. My mother and dad drank, and they wore shorts and they danced, and you didn't do that in the Church of Christ.

Larry They played cards, I bet.

Janis They did, so I grew up playing cards, but I didn't drink until I was in my 20's. I grew up with parallel paths, and then I went to a small Methodist college. My dad didn't think a girl needed to go to college; I could stay at home and work to pay my tuition. We had to take a freshman Bible course. I had this wonderful Cuban Baptist teacher. Do you want me to talk about this or not?

Larry Yes, I think this is important.

Janis We had to take a freshman Bible course. The very first day he had us bring our Bibles to class and he said, "Now it's not possible to read the Bible literally, because there are many strands of oral tradition that have resulted in the Bible; you will see the contradictions if you are awake and look." He said, "For instance, in the first and second chapter in Genesis you have two different creation stories." I shot my little literalist hand up and said, "Dr. Benetez, that cannot be so. God would not contradict himself." He gently and lovingly came over and asked me to open my Bible. With a big smile on his face, hand on my shoulder patting me, he asked me to read the first chapter which I did. Then he asked me to read the second chapter which I started. Then I realized I'd been had, and I burst into tears. I cried all day long. I lost my fundamentalist world.

Larry It was an epiphany for you.

Janis It was. Then I married a man who was going to be a missionary for the Disciples of Christ church. The Church of Christ had actually broken off from the Disciples of Christ; that alleviated a little bit of my guilt that I was raised with in my whole fundamentalist era. We went to Yale Divinity School and that'll blow your mind. It was such an incredible experience to be there during the years we were there, in the early sixties.

Larry You had a hard time getting in because you were a woman, didn't you?

Janis I did, I did. Yale just recently had a convocation of women graduates of the Divinity School, and they just came out with a journal telling the history.

Larry That's neat.

Janis All the issues around "otherness" are sort of the same thing, whether it's slavery or the ordination of women or homosexuals.

Larry Some of the churches still haven't come to grips with that.

Janis No.

Larry The Episcopal Church is having a hard time.

Janis The Episcopal churches are much more liberal than many, but there are conservatives in every denomination.

Larry There are schisms though, too.

Janis I think one of the reasons that the purpose of the Fetzer Institute is so important to me is because I really believe that everything belongs, and that schisms occur when we see each other as 'the other,' instead of working on ourselves so that we understand how to extend forgiveness and unconditional love. A schism is deadly, literally deadly.

Larry Yes, it sure is.

Janis Let me just say one more thing about how I got to John.

I lost a son to cancer along the way, and that opened my eyes. I was trained to be a psychotherapist along the way. I understood about how beliefs drive your life, and how there are all kinds of different levels of consciousness, different belief systems coming out of that. When my son died, he had been served by the Center for Attitudinal Healing, and he wanted me to start a center in Austin, which I did. That's how I met Jerry Jampolsky, I was introduced to A Course in Miracles and, low and behold, John's major path at the time I met him was A Course in Miracles.

Larry I didn't realize that. That was very good then, wasn't it?

Janis I think that was the thing that really gave John Fetzer confidence in my spiritual foundation.

Larry You had that common bond. That's really interesting, that you encountered that before you got to know John.

Janis Sometimes I think that I would not be a Trustee at the Fetzer Institute if my son hadn't died. I'm sure that I would not have evolved spiritually if he had not died.

Larry Isn't that funny how things work out.

Janis It's amazing.

Larry It really is.

Janis This is how the Holy Spirit works, in my opinion.

Allen, my son, had a very virulent tumor that was caused as a result of his being a twin, a very rare form of cancer. There was an experimental chemotherapy program going on in San Francisco, under Dr. Arthur Ablen. Texas Children's Hospital in Houston suggested that my son, Allen, might be accepted as a candidate for that program, and he was. He went out to San Francisco to participate in that chemotherapy pilot. The day Allen left, I picked up a magazine and read about the Center for Attitudinal Healing, just across the Golden Gate Bridge in Tiburon, so he goes to Tiburon. It transformed the way he experienced his dying process. It was beautiful to behold. He came home at Christmas totally at peace with whether he would live or die. I think he knew he was going to die.

Larry Yes.

Janis He did die. But his last request to me was to start a center here. I called Jerry Jampolsky, the founder of the Tiburon center, because I was going to start a center in Austin; and I did start a center. It was the fourth center in the country, and it served thousands of people for over twenty-five years.

I don't know if you know this, but Judith Skutch-Whitson and Jerry Jampolsky took A Course in Miracles to John Fetzer to try to understand it. Here's the link to John Fetzer that I didn't even know I had. It's all because of my son.

Larry Right, Jim Gordon wandered into your office, right?

Janis Wandered in, yes. Jim recommended me to John, because he had a clairvoyant experience in my office building. Then, according to his assistant Lisa Rose, who

was a volunteer at the Center for Attitudinal Healing, Jim called John, told him that I was the one who was supposed to help him reinvent his Foundation.

Larry Right.

Janis Jim called me back and said, "John wants to fly you secretly to Kalamazoo." I think it was the 23rd of June 1987, 24 years ago. I was supposed to be with Jerry Jampolsky out in California on the same day, and I chose Kalamazoo. Then Jim called back and said, "John wants a reference for you." I had no idea in the world who John Fetzer would know and trust that knows me. Jim said, "How about Jerry Jampolsky," and then the circle was complete. Isn't that amazing?

Larry It really is. John had this belief that he had been reincarnated many times and that a certain group of people had also been reincarnated with him.

Janis Right.

Larry Did he ever talk to you like maybe you were one of those people?

Janis I don't know if he talked to me about it, or if he talked to Rob about me, and Rob said I was. I don't know. John probably had some beliefs that I don't really know about. I don't discount them. I just don't know.

But in A Course in Miracles, in the teacher's manual there's a section on, "Is reincarnation real"? The Course says it doesn't really matter. That's kind of my feeling about that. But he really believed that, and I honored that; and it may well be true, so I guess in a way I was.

Larry Did you have any idea where he developed that idea? Do you think it was through Jim Gordon?

Janis I think it was, you'll have to ask Jim.

Larry I will, but I like to get as many different viewpoints as possible.

Janis Right. Jim channeled a lot and apparently John channeled a lot also.

Larry He did?

Janis He didn't trust his own channeling. I heard Jim talk about that. He didn't trust his own channelings much. He was always searching, always looking for someone else to validate, or to send him on a different trajectory, or expand his awareness.

Larry Yes, there's a dichotomy there, because he certainly trusted what he called his inner voice as far as business dealings.

Janis He trusted it with me.

Larry Yes.

Janis In selecting me, he just interviewed me for one day, and it was very clear he had a definite hit that I was the one, and that was it.

Larry You were a miracle. Didn't he say that?

Janis Yes.

Larry What I'm getting at is, he really trusted that, because your relationship was a business relationship at first.

Janis It was. I went in to fire people.

Larry Yes, you went right to telling them that. It needed to be done it seems to me.

Janis Oh yes, it did. There was a lot going on that wasn't good.

Larry But he just didn't seem to trust his own inner voice, as far as within the realm of spirituality. He wanted somebody else to be going along with him, it seems like.

Janis I don't know if it was an issue of trust, or it was an issue of humility. I think he lived in awe and wonder about all the experiences that he had. He had a lot of different kinds of experiences.

Larry Oh, yes.

Janis Mostly he just loved his meditation, his time to be in union with God.

Larry Yes, I've not encountered another person in my life that had such an open mind to everything.

Janis Incredible.

Larry He was ready to listen.

Janis And he was very astute and smart. Sometimes when people have open minds, they don't have opinions. They don't have points of view.

Larry Yes, he was not afraid to form opinions about something being false, like some of those mediums when he went to Camp Chesterfield.

Janis That's one thing he said to me one night at dinner. I can't remember what's in that archival thing that you read. One night at dinner he said, "You know, I have explored and listened to all kinds of alternative folks who are into their psychology, into channeling, into tarot, doing readings," et cetera, and though I know he trusted all that, he said, "And most of them are quacks."

Larry Isn't that interesting.

Janis Yes, and most of them are quacks. So he did trust his own perception about making discernments in that way.

Larry Did he ever talk to you about seeing Jesus as a child?

Janis Yes.

Larry There are several different versions of that story, and I'd like to know yours.

Janis Here's the version that I recall. When he was, I think, a little boy, it was he and his mom and they were having financial struggles. She was working at a department store, in the millinery.

Larry That's right.

Janis She was making hats for ladies, and he was running the elevator. It was one of those old-fashioned crank elevators. It got stuck between floors, and this little boy was scared. He had the experience of Jesus descending down through the elevator. Jesus asked John to put his arms around his feet, and he took him way, way up above the planet; and then he brought him back and put him in the elevator and he told him not to be afraid, he would always be there. And then it was over, and then the elevator worked.

Larry That's a different version also, so that's very valuable to hear.

Janis Well, that's what I remember.

Larry No that very well could be. Some of the other versions are that he was playing around with the elevator with a bunch of other kids, and it was too heavy and it shot down; I guess there's some kind of a mechanism at the bottom that keeps it from crashing, a bumper or something. That scared him, of course, and then the next night or a couple nights later he had this dream that Jesus was doing that.

Janis Oh, I've never heard that part.

Larry Okay.

Janis I just heard he put his arms around the feet of Jesus and was carried out of there.

Larry Evidently he saw Jesus again in Hawaii. Have you heard that?

Janis I don't think I have heard that.

Larry Yes, that's another. We're trying to get exactly the story about that, and we haven't yet. There's also a lot of information about Archangel Michael. Did he ever talk to you about that?

Janis He would refer to the Archangel Michael like one would refer to President Obama. He would say, the Archangel Michael says, or the Archangel Michael will [do this.]??

Larry You may not be able to answer this, this might be something for Jim.

Janis Jim knows an awful more about that than I do.

Larry We're wondering if he had the belief in the Age of Aquarius prior to Jim, or did Jim inspire that? Some of the channelings, I know, came from the Archangel Michael.

Janis I think that that started with Jim, but I don't know that for sure.

Larry Okay.

Janis Yes, I think that started with Jim.

Larry It's really interesting.

Janis Of course, you have to remember it was back when the Age of Aquarius was being written.

Larry Yes, it's in the stage play and film "Hair," even.

Janis I don't really know other sources of conversation about that, but my initial response is that was Jim. You've talked to Mike?

Larry Gergely, yes.

Janis There was something about Jim Gordon bringing a channeled piece of information about the Foundation to Kalamazoo. Then Mike thought he'd stolen it or something like that; clearly, before he met Jim, John had had some sort of inspiration.

Larry There was a sketch that he recognized as having something to do with that.

Janis With the Foundation.

Larry With the Age of Aquarius and Archangel Michael. There's a symbol of some sort that John immediately recognized, and said he'd been looking for it.

Janis That's right, John said that. Then why would he be looking for it if he didn't have some experience of it before Jim?

Larry You can take that a couple different ways. He was looking specifically for that, or he was looking for something like that, if you know what I mean?

Janis I don't know. There's so much esotericism that surrounds the mythology of John.

Larry Yes, there is.

Janis And I'm not that kind of person. Do you know the Myers Briggs test at all?

Larry No.

Janis That's all right. I'm a person who has a mixture of intuitiveness and practicality, and that's why I do the work I do in the world. I think John did, too.

Larry Yes.

Janis Perhaps I was a bit more skeptical.

Larry Yes, I am, too. I consider myself an agnostic, but I'm certainly not going to say no. It's not my role to say no.

Janis Right.

Larry But that can be healthy. Did he ever talk about UFOs?

Janis Yeah, he talked about aliens. He clearly believed that there were aliens here, and he had some kind of connection with people who had a lot more experience in that regard than he did. But he believed in them.

Larry Edgar Mitchell and Noetics and things like that.

Janis I don't know if Edgar believed in aliens or not. Do you know that?

Larry He certainly had some kind of an [experience??]

Janis He had an epiphany when he was out in space.

Larry Yes, he did.

Janis But that's different than thinking there were aliens on the planet Earth.

Larry There's something to do with that.

Janis I don't know. John was just always researching. One of the things he did early on, when he was still Chairman of the Board -- you probably don't know about the Marfa lights.

Larry No.

Janis Out in far west Texas, just outside of Marfa, Texas, and the Fort Davis area, there's a range of mountains out there; at the base of those mountains almost any night you can see these lights.

Larry Oh yes, I guess I have heard about that.

Janis And they're rather amazing. I was out there one time, and I went into a bookstore. I went out to see the McDonald Observatory and I went into a bookstore, and there was a booklet there on the Marfa lights. I picked it up to buy it, and to the lady who was the cashier, I said, "Have you lived here all your life?" She said, "Oh, yeah." I said, "Well, have you ever seen the Marfa lights?" "Oh yeah, a lot of times." I said, "Does it scare you to see them, or how is that?" She said, "Oh no, they're friendly." Then I talked to somebody else, who said they were driving down the road one night, and the lights were up on the hood of his car, bouncing along the side of the car.

Larry Did you say that Fetzer Foundation funded?

Janis While John was still alive, still Chairman of the Board, still coming in, he funded a group of scientists, some from here and some from Europe, and he put tons of fancy equipment under them and sent them out to that area of Texas. They stayed out there for a long time, and they saw them a lot; but they couldn't get any kind of radioactivity or anything that would pick up on their existence. They were all seeing them. I remember hearing John ask Hal Putoff, who was one of the physicists who went out there, what he really thought that was. I think they did that for about six months, it was a big project. He said, "The only thing I can imagine is that it's another form of consciousness that we don't know anything about."

Larry Oh really?

Janis There's clearly consciousness there. They play with people.

Larry Oh, do they really?

Janis Yes.

Larry So it's not like a reflection.

Janis No, no. I think, from a distance, you saw what you might think was car lights going down the road, except they jump around. The last time I saw them when we were out there was we went out between Christmas and New Years. Beautiful desert, high desert place to go, and there is a place along the road that they recommend you park your car and look for them. We stood there for a long time. We didn't see them. Decided we'd leave. We drove back down the road where it was darker, and all of a sudden there they were; there were six of them and they would jump over each other.

Larry No kidding.

Janis Yeah.

Larry That's amazing.

Janis I know it is. There's a lot we don't understand. But he actually funded that.

Larry Yes, I could understand why.

Janis Consciousness was big; he understood. I say G-O-D is a word that we use for the ultimate ground of being, and we don't know what that is. Oh, my gosh.

Larry We can't.

Janis We don't know what that is, not in our capacity.

Larry Yes.

Janis But consciousness is another word which is used for that, like some incredible consciousness that created all this.

Larry Yes.

Janis He was into consciousness research. Consciousness precedes manifestation, as opposed to our brains creating consciousness, which is now being 'proven' by science. I just was with Stanley Grof who was at the Institute three weeks ago. We did a weekend workshop. He's a wonderful psychiatrist who's done tremendous breakthrough work. The whole field of psychology is on its head right now, because we're really beginning to understand that consciousness precedes manifestation.

Larry There are so many things we've yet to learn about the human mind and its powers. Part of me wants to dismiss channeling, but I can't, because something is happening that we just don't fully understand.

Janis They all call it collective consciousness.

Larry Evidently they're discovering that there is power in a lot of people concentrating on something.

Janis That's right.

Larry That can cause physical things to happen.

Janis That's right. Our minds collectively can create reality.

Larry It makes sense.

Janis Your mind creates reality all the time.

Larry Yes. John actually wanted to be taken up by an alien. He expressed that, that he would really have liked that experience, which I guess shows how open his mind was, because I don't think I would.

Janis Would scare me.

Larry You mentioned in the tape, I don't know if you were there or you heard about it, that near-death experience out in Tucson.

Janis I heard about that

.

Larry You heard about that.

Janis Yes, that was before my time, but I came into his life when he was recovering from that.

Larry Okay.

Janis He interviewed me in pajamas all day long.

Larry Oh, no kidding.

Janis He was weak.

Larry Yes, and did he have the hearing problem then, too?

Janis No, he didn't.

Larry He later on—

Janis If he did, I didn't know it.

Larry This was three hours; even though he was recovering, he gave that much energy to the interview.

Janis To me? Oh, he was with me longer than three hours.

Larry Oh, really?

Janis Yes, most of the day and into the evening. We would do dinner with some of the staff.

Larry That had to be a lot of energy.

Janis He was energized by that interview.

Larry Okay.

Janis He got hopeful. He was very discouraged. He didn't have anybody he trusted to have the capacity to go in and make a difference; and I wasn't smart enough to know how hard it was going to be.

Larry But you sensed that right away, what the problems were there?

Janis Oh yes, it was real easy. There were some big ones, yes. The three staff members went to dinner with us, and they corroborated what was going on, and then after I terminated the President.

Larry Lloyd.

Janis Lloyd. I spent a lot of time working with the staff, and he had been awful.

Larry Yes, he yelled at people.

Janis Yes, he did. I have a lot of empathy for him on the one hand. Here he had this man who had hired him—and this is partly John's responsibility—he hired him to do a job that he couldn't really describe, that Lloyd was still feeling his way into, and then he nearly dies. He had a rubber stamp Board. One of the major contributions I made to the Fetzer Institute, the Foundation at the time, was I talked him into creating a Board of Directors.

Larry A real Board.

Janis A real Board. I wasn't on it, and I didn't want to be on it. I tell you I didn't. But I just said to him, "You know, you nearly died. What if you don't wake up some morning?"

Larry Yes.

Janis So he has Lloyd. He has a rubber stamp Board that Lloyd doesn't work with, and isn't guided by. There's no engagement process. John would make a decision, then he would write up some minutes and send it out for Judy Skutch Whitson and Bob Jahn's signature, and that was it. And there's \$200 million sitting on the table.

Well, Lloyd was a social worker. He'd never had that kind of money in his history. There's a comfort level with money that is really important. You don't have to have had a lot of money to have it, but it's unusual to have a social worker have that kind of comfort with money. They're used to working with people who don't have any. They don't get paid very much, and they're interested in fixing and saving people, and not imagining from a business and strategic point of view how one might use those kinds of resources to accomplish a strategic planning in the world that's undergirding a mission.

Larry Sure.

Janis The mission was not clear. There was not even a mission statement at that point in time. So he hires this man to do a job, but the job is very unclear. Then he goes off and nearly dies. He doesn't have a Board. I think Lloyd probably did the best he knew how, and was in over his head.

Larry Yes, I think that's it.

Janis All kinds of people had been in over their head at that point in time. I never thought he was a bad person.

Larry Right.

Janis You know, we can all rage if we feel inadequate enough or fearful enough, but he wasn't prepared emotionally, or from an experiential point of view, to really do the work that needed to be done. Even if he had to make it up, he didn't know how to make it up.

Larry Yes.

Janis He didn't know how to make it up. I've always had a lot of compassion for him really. Sorry I had to be the one to say.

Larry It had to be done.

Janis I feel like when you terminate somebody who's been 'peter-principled', and he had been peter-principled, you do a favor when you say this is not your calling.

Larry He just advanced too far.

Larry Yes. Then you were kind of opposed to Glenn coming in.

Janis Oh, I wasn't opposed to Glenn coming in. I was opposed to the process.

Larry What I'm wondering about is, Did you sense that he wasn't being completely honest about his spiritual beliefs?

Janis Who, Glenn?

Larry Because I think that's what happened, wasn't it? He was a very firm Methodist.

Janis No, it had nothing to do with his beliefs.

Larry Okay.

Janis Glenn had a huge ego, and it had nothing to do with his religious beliefs. His religious beliefs weren't that different than John's in many, many ways.

Larry Really?

Janis No, he was a very liberal Christian man, and so was John Fetzer. John was a Christian, a very liberal Christian, and so was Glenn. Now Glenn had a Ph.D. from Yale Divinity School. I have a masters from Yale Divinity School. That doesn't mean that you are religious. It's a graduate school of religion. He was an ordained Methodist minister, but he didn't do church work.

Larry Right.

Janis He ran universities. He was the Ambassador to the United Nations under Richard Nixon. He was a politician. He was a very good speaker, and he was a manager of his vision, with no holds barred. His problem was that he was not loyal to John. He didn't understand what John wanted to do, and what he did understand about it, he didn't think that's what he wanted to spend his life doing. So he was not aligned with John Fetzer. And he had such a huge ego. He couldn't listen to anybody.

Larry I've somehow gotten the idea that he purported to be into the New Age type religiosity, but that he was not. Now maybe that's erroneous.

Janis I didn't even think that was an issue. John didn't ask me if I was New Age.

Larry No.

Janis I don't even know what New Age means.

Larry It means a lot of things.

Janis Yes. That was not it. I don't think that Glenn was a spiritual man. That is to say, I think of spiritual as having an experience of the sacred in your life. It really causes you to see with new eyes. He was pretty much in his head and not in his heart. He was very strategic and agenda driven, and he wanted it his way. He pulled me aside at the Yale Club in New York, at an investment committee meeting, and told me if he couldn't have it his way, I needed to tell Mr. Fetzer that he was leaving. He thought that it would just kill John, because John depended on having a strong executive.

But the truth is, that was not the truth. I participated in terminating Glenn as well. Now, I was not against Glenn coming, but John hired me, and wanted me to do two things. He wanted me to terminate Lloyd, he wanted me to conduct a search for the next president, and he wanted me to hold the staff together while I did that. The day that Lloyd was terminated, that evening I went to John's house for dinner; it had been a long day, and I walked in, and I had been there just a few minutes and he handed me a resume and said, "Now, this is who I want to be the next president." Well, I'm telling you, you could kick me in the pit of my tummy.

Larry Yes, you thought you were to conduct your search, right?

Janis Exactly. I felt like I didn't know what to think. I thought, have I been lied to? What is going on here? What's this about? I said, "I thought you wanted to do the search." He said, "This is the man I want to be the next." I asked, "Can you just explain to me why?" John had served on the Board of the Noetic Sciences with Glenn, and he said this: "Glenn Olds is one of the best connected people that I know of, who understands what we're up to and can bring credibility to our Foundation."

Larry That's what he wanted at that time.

Janis And Glenn did. I mean, Glen did that major big conference and he had people there from everywhere, and the Foundation became credible.

Larry Lawrence Rockefeller and all that.

Janis Lawrence was already a friend of John's.

Larry Oh, was he? That's interesting. Do you know what connection there was?

Janis I'm not sure, but Judy knows.

Larry Oh, okay. Yes, she mentioned him. That's an amazing story.

Janis I don't know if you've seen the film of that conference.

Larry I haven't, no.

Janis You should do that. You must listen to John's speech that he gave at that conference. It's very important.

Larry I've read a transcript of that speech.

Janis Okay, it's not the same as seeing the man, hearing his voice. If you get a chance, do that.

Larry He was really a remarkable man. I met him in about 1980, and I was so impressed with how humble he was.

Janis Oh, yes.

Larry I was interviewing him for his history. I wrote a history of Kalamazoo and there was going to be a page about his endeavors; and he was so humble, like he was tickled, that I wanted to talk to him about what he'd done. A few years later I did the exhibit on his life in the Fetzer Center in Western [Michigan University]'s campus and got to know him. He was the same way, just so humble. "You can have whatever you want to put in there," and he took me through his house. Was he that way with you, too?

Janis Oh yes, absolutely. He would meet me at the door in the evening, "Oh honey, how are you? How's your day been? Come on in here. We've fixed you some iced tea." You know, just sweet.

Larry He was like an old-fashioned gentleman, wasn't he?

Janis Oh yes, very fatherly toward me. I was 47 and he was 86.

Larry Yes, but that's part of his spirituality, I think.

Janis Oh, it is.

Larry The way he treated people.

Janis Yes, he was someone who believed in love, unconditional love.

Larry Yes, and it's a tragedy about his relationship with Rhea, because I'm very, very convinced that he loved her dearly.

Janis Oh, he did.

Larry Then she got Alzheimer's and that had to be very hurtful for him.

Janis Of course it was, but this is one of the most beautiful things about him: In the evening, before he would go to bed, he would go to the nursing home and put her to sleep. He told me he would get in bed with her. She didn't know anything hardly, but he would get in bed with her, and hold her and then she would sleep.

Larry Any of us would be lucky to have that relationship.

Janis Oh, no kidding.

So I wasn't against Glenn Olds. I did go ahead then with John and meet him together. We interviewed Glenn and Eva, his wife. The first clue I got to a potential difficulty was this: We were hosting him and Eva at dinner at his house one evening for an interview, and it was as if they had rehearsed a dialog that they were going to create, with the intention of getting her hired as well.

Larry Oh, no kidding.

Janis No kidding.

Larry And that happened, didn't it?

Janis Briefly, yes. But John didn't like to do that.

Larry That was all like a Machiavellian stunt.

Janis Yes, it was. Of course, that evening it didn't seem Machiavellian; but he wanted her to have a place in the Institute. The President and the President's wife had run all these universities together, and he wanted her to have a role and a purpose. She came from being a big victim. She cried, and she just had to do this work with her husband, and they were too old not to work together.

Larry Was he forcing her to do this? She didn't really want to?

Janis No, she wanted to. They were totally aligned that they were going to get two salaries out of the Institute.

Larry Oh, was it a money issue, too, then?

Janis Looked to me like it was, though it was presented as he was trying to take care of his wife and that she had a lot of talents and could make a big contribution.

Larry Yes, that can be the case in some situations.

Janis It could be. It wasn't in this situation.

Larry I work with my wife very closely. We're kind of a team.

Janis Well, my husband and I are in the same office.

Larry Yes.

Janis But I don't do his business and he doesn't do mine. I don't think he could. It takes a rare couple to be able to do that.

Larry We complement each other on our skills.

Janis That's great.

Larry Now do you know anything about Srini and the lab?

Janis Srini.

Larry Srini, yes.

Janis S-r-i-n-i, Srini. Yes, I know a lot about him. John was determined to have a lab at the Institute or some place, and Glenn wasn't interested in that at all, so John just set it up himself.

Larry Oh, he did?

Janis He knew Srini from other connections, I don't know how. Back where the computer room is now, and Pam's office and back in there, was converted to a laboratory for Srini. They did research for acupuncture points; acupuncture research was going on.

Larry Yes, which is very legitimate research.

Janis Oh, it was very legitimate. At that point in the history of acupuncture research, it was really important to do that kind of work, for somebody to be doing it. Now it's been done lots of other places; but John wanted to research subtle energy - in fact energy medicine.

Larry Reading of the auras.

Janis Yes, and moving chi in your body and all that. There's a lot of real stuff about all that. So he sent Srini in. That was kind of a fly in the ointment for Glenn.

Larry Did Glenn do away with it himself or what happened?

Janis I don't remember what happened. That kind of ran out, whatever was going on.

Larry Do you know Dr. Dick Williams in Kalamazoo?

Janis Isn't he in Kalamazoo?

Larry Yes, he is.

Janis I don't know him. I've heard of him.

Larry We interviewed him, and he was very much avant-garde in biofeedback and holistic medicine, and things like that, and he worked with John.

Janis Did he work with Srini?

Larry No, not with Srini that I know of, but he worked with John, and John helped fund some of his activities.

Janis John had funded a lot in alternative medicine on his own, through the Foundation's structure, before I ever got there.

Larry Yes.

Janis Very interested in energy fields and how they impacted human body and vice versa.

Larry Yes. Did he ever mention Atlantis?

Janis Yes.

Larry He did? In passing like?

Janis Yes, just in passing conversations. It just peaked my curiosity, and it was not to the point of our discussion. It was just something he took for granted.

Larry But he conceived the idea that he had been there, and evidently had misused some crystal power, and had helped bring about the destruction.

Janis Of Atlantis?

Larry Yes, now that may have come through Jim.

Janis It always amazed me that he thought he was Ramses II.

Larry I was going to ask you: What's your take on the Hall of Records, those eight people?

Janis They represent who John thought he had been.

Larry That's never specifically articulated in any of the literature, but it was a common belief.

Janis That's the truth.

Larry Okay.

Janis The reason the Hall of Records was there was, they represented the eight lives or so that he thought he had had.

Larry Okay.

Janis One of them was John of the Cross.

Larry Right.

Larry Socrates.

Janis Yeah, Ramses II. Now, you know, you should turn that machine off.

Larry Okay. [TAPE OFF??]

Janis My take on the Hall of Records is, for John it clearly represented the journey that his soul had been on through all these different incarnations. He felt as though he had tried many times to do the will of God and follow the calling that was his; and that this time, if he got the Foundation right, he didn't have to come back. That was his belief system.

Larry That's what I understand.

Janis Right, so when he met Rob Lehman, he really had the experience that Rob was the one who would do it. You know what? I think Rob did a grand job.

Larry Oh, no question.

Janis Oh, my goodness. Rob stood on John's shoulders. He didn't ever go up against John. He loved John, and listened to John, and reinterpreted in many ways what John wanted in language that could bring work into mainstream and not sound

flaky and crazy; that was a very appropriate and honoring thing for him to do for John.

Larry Wonderful.

Janis He strategized brilliantly. First of all, we did mind-body work that was cutting edge. We made a big difference in that. Then we added Spirit to it, mind, body, Spirit. Rob has a beautiful way of listening for the world, so that he speaks into it just at the right time. It was a strategic movement of the Foundation. Of course, through post 9/11, the world was ready to hear something about: There's got to be another way other than the violence and the fear that accompanies it.

Larry Yes, my conception is that John had a vision and Rob does, too, and they were able to work something out together.

Janis I think what John fundamentally wanted to do was to demonstrate the relationship of the sacred to Everything, and to bring back into consciousness what he would think of as our true self, our manifestation of consciousness to serve the world with love. I know that that's what John wanted. If you listen to his speech or read his speech at that conference, he said eventually whatever the Institute does, it's going to be about Love. That was early on in this era of the Fetzer Institute. And if you step out from that, then look and see where your position to serve is, to expand the consciousness of the power of love in the world, there are many different ways you could do that. Under Rob's leadership, we built a bridge from an old-fashioned kind of New Agey way of talking about all that, to remembering that this is the most ancient of wisdom in every tradition, secular or spiritual. This is ancient wisdom, and needs to be brought forth and reexamined and re-embodied for our time.

Larry This is probably a failure on my part, but I have a hard time defining love.

Janis It's not a failure. It's just that it's so huge. I think of it as an energy. I think of it as commitment. I think of it as unconditional. In other words, I don't love you because you are, for example, wealthy or good or kind to me. I love you the way you are and the way you are not, which means I hold you in positive regard. For me, I learned a lot about love when I went to the Center for Attitudinal Healing. It's like a 12-step program, and there are principles of attitudinal healing. The first principle is, "The essence of your being is love." For me, that connected back into my faith tradition. God is love. I've already told you, my God is huge, and I think of love as the fundamental energy that is always there, ready to manifest itself. What blocks love's awareness is fear, and fear is a product of our own ego; it's our own thinking that we're God, and we need to be in control, we need to be in charge. The truth is, it's all a paradox. We do need to take charge. We do need to be in control; and we need to realize we're not.

Larry Yes.

Janis All of that is in place here.

Larry I have a philosophy, and I don't call it love but maybe it is, of treating other people. I use the term decency, to do the decent thing.

Janis It's a beautiful expression of love.

Larry It's hard to define, but you know what it is.

Janis That's right. Love is a word that's been cheapened a lot in our culture, and sexualized. But it is to be explored in a very amazing way. Your term decency, what a beautiful expression of love's energy. Kindness and generosity of spirit, patience.

Larry Doing the right thing. I think everybody knows what's right and what's wrong.

Janis That's one of the things that's so beautiful about what Fetzer's doing right now: we have these Fetzer Advisory Councils. We have 16 different Advisory Councils, in 16 different domains of enterprise in life. Within each of those Advisory Councils, these wonderful human beings have been pulled together so they can live in dialog about: Where does love and forgiveness exist in this domain? What do we call it? What does it look like? Where does it fail to show up? It's like that.

Larry Do those publications, is that part of it, those little booklets?

Janis No, not yet. This is a brand new thing that we're doing, under our new president, Larry Sullivan. There will be publications, I'm sure, that will come out of it.

Larry Yes.

Janis We're on our way to Assisi to a big Global Gathering there. These Fetzer Advisory Councils will be presenting examples there of love and forgiveness in business, in healthcare, in the military, in life.

Larry They'll be talking about specific things that have happened?

Janis Yes, they're going to really help the world to understand that it's possible to have love and forgiveness in every domain of life.

Larry That's going to be quite an accomplishment.

Janis The purpose of the Fetzer Institute is transformation of consciousness, and probably by the time you finish all this, you'll notice some transformation inside yourself.

Larry Yes. Oh, it's a learning experience for me, definitely. That's why I'm enjoying this learning.

Janis Oh, I understand. I was in your position in 1987. I interviewed all 25 of the Fetzer staff.

Larry Oh, did you?

Janis Ye. We asked questions like: Why are you here? What's the purpose of this organization? What works about it? What doesn't work about it? If you could change three things, what would that be? Why have you stayed during such a hard time? How is this in sync with how you understand your calling in life? Yes, it was great.

Larry The oral tradition and oral history is a very [practical ??]. I've never written a book that I haven't used it, because people tell you things that have never been put in textual form. You've got to be a little careful, because the human mind sometimes is not perfect. Your memory has been slightly altered by subsequent events.

Janis Right.

Larry Still it's very, very good. Well, I want to thank you for this.

Janis Well, I hope this has been helpful.

Larry Oh, it has been a tremendous help. I'm going to turn this off now.